



PRESS RELEASE

Only 13% of Canadians Aware of Public Debt Situation in Newfoundland and Labrador

Three in Four (74%) Believe a Bankrupt Newfoundland and Labrador would have Negative Impact on Rest of Canada

Toronto, ON, 17, 2019 — Thirteen percent (13%) of Canadians are aware of the high levels of government debt in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the Schroeder Policy Group.

According to the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador's government debt is \$14.6 billion, which amounts to nearly \$27,800 per person living in Newfoundland and Labrador. By comparison, the per capita debt owed by the Federal Government of Canada is \$18,678. Awareness levels are, naturally, highest in Newfoundland and Labrador (61%), but even there, 39% are not aware of the public debt situation. Awareness levels are much lower in Atlantic Canada more generally (19%), Quebec (18%), Alberta (13%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (12%), Ontario (11%), and British Columbia (10%).

Four in ten (43%) Canadians believe that Ontario has the most debt per capita, while 19% believe that Quebec has the highest per-capita debt. One in ten believe that British Columbia (9%), Alberta (9%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (7%) have the most per-capita debt of all Canadian provinces, respectively, while fewer believe that this dubious distinction belongs to Saskatchewan (3%), Manitoba (3%), New Brunswick (3%), Nova Scotia (2%) or PEI (2%). Eight in ten (81%) of Newfoundland and Labrador residents correctly identified their own provincial government as having the most debt per capita. Interestingly, Ontarians were next most likely to point to their own province (71%) as having the highest debt per capita.

Canadians were asked to assess which province they believe is having the most difficult time economically right now. Aggregating their top two choices reveals that one in three (32%) believe that Alberta is having the hardest time, followed by 31% who think that Newfoundland and Labrador is having the hardest time economically. Fewer believe that Ontario (28%), New Brunswick (19%), Quebec (18%), Nova Scotia (18%), BC (17%), PEI (13%), Saskatchewan (13%) or Manitoba (11%) is having the hardest time economically.

People are much more likely to point to their home province as being most challenged than other provinces. This trend is most pronounced in Newfoundland and Labrador (95%), followed by those living in Alberta (69%) and Quebec (52%).



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If Newfoundland and Labrador were no longer to meet its debt-payment requirements and budget expenditures, and was forced to declare bankruptcy, three quarters (74%) of Canadians believe that the impact on the rest of Canada would be negative (27% significantly negative / 46% moderately negative). Others (21%) believe that the negative impact would only be minor. Just 5% say there would be no negative impact at all.

Ontarians (77%) are the most likely to believe that the impact would be at least moderately negative, while Atlantic Canadians (68%) and, specifically, those in Newfoundland and Labrador (65%) are less likely to believe this is the case – yet still a solid majority.





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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between October 8th to 15th, 2019, on behalf of the Schroeder Policy Group. For this survey, a sample of 2000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Sean Simpson
Vice President, Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 416 324-2002
sean.simpson@ipsos.com

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